

# 2016 Annual Report

Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center  
Iron Mountain, Michigan



*Focused on Excellence*  
*Putting Veterans First*



## Message from the Director



**James W. Rice**  
Medical Center Director

It is my privilege to present to you the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center's 2016 Annual Report.

Our motto, *Focused on Excellence – Putting Veterans First*, reflects our goal of being the healthcare of choice for Veterans and to be recognized as a leader in rural health care. As you read this report, you will recognize that our employees do just that. They strive every day to provide excellent, compassionate, and patient-centered care to our Veterans. The excellent work of our employees is evidenced by OGJVAMC being nationally ranked 19th for *Quality*, 17th for *Efficiency*, and a *4-Star Quality rating*. We were also recognized as the eighth best place to work among all facilities in the Veterans Health Administration.

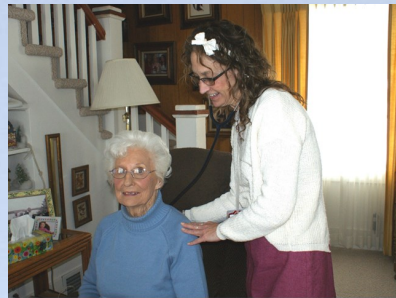
In 2016, VHA made it a priority to increase access to VA healthcare, one of the primary focus areas of VA's *MyVA* initiative to transform the culture of the VA. OGJVAMC embraced *MyVA* Access principles and I'm proud to state that we have achieved a number of its milestones. We were one of the first 39 VA Medical Centers to achieve same day access for primary care and mental health services, and on September 1 we began offering Veterans the ability to schedule routine audiology and optometry appointments without a referral from their primary care provider. We also continued to expand our telehealth technology, which is now utilized by 43 clinics and now includes hearing exams and hearing aid fittings. Another way we are improving access to care is through the VA Choice Program. While we still have much work that needs to be done to improve this program, more Veterans are utilizing the Choice Program every day. We have and will continue to work with our community partners to improve the Veteran experience with this program.

The foundation of everything we do to at OGJVAMC is based on our ICARE core values – *Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence*. Our Nation Heroes expect and deserve nothing less.

James W. Rice  
Medical Center Director







## Because I CARE, I will...

### **I**ntegrity

Act with high morale principle. Adhere to the highest professional standards. Maintain the trust and confidence of all with whom I engage.

### **C**ommitment

Work diligently to serve Veterans and other beneficiaries. Be driven by an earnest belief in VA's mission. Fulfill my individual responsibilities and organizational responsibilities.

### **A**dvocacy

Be truly Veteran-centric by identifying, fully considering, and appropriately advancing the interests of Veterans and beneficiaries.

### **R**espect

Treat all those I serve and with whom I work with dignity and respect. Show respect to earn it.

### **E**xcellence

Strive for the highest quality and continuous improvement. Be thoughtful and decisive in leadership, accountable for my actions, willing to admit mistakes, and rigorous in correcting them.





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## Our Mission:

*Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well-being.*

## Our Vision:

*Leaders in Rural Healthcare - Focused on Excellence - Putting Veterans First.*

### Stewardship

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## Our Legacy: 66 Years of Serving Veterans

With many Veterans returning home from World War II with injuries, Iron Mountain, MI, was chosen in 1945 by the Veterans Administration as a site for one of the 100 new VA hospitals being built.

On March 14, 1948, construction began on 31.5 acres that had once been the site for a large sawmill and lumberyard. At a cost of \$6.5 million, it was the largest building project ever to date in the Upper Peninsula. The six-story, 265-bed hospital with 360 staff was dedicated on March 5, 1950.

The first expansion of services came in 1975 when the Nursing Home Care Unit was opened to provide long-term care.

The 1990s saw major changes at the Iron Mountain VA Hospital. With the VA's shift from inpatient to outpatient services, a new 16,000 square foot ambulatory care addition was completed in August of 1997, which provided increased primary care space and improved outpatient services. This project represented the first major construction at the Iron Mountain facility since 1950.

The shift to outpatient services also necessitated primary care clinics closer to Veterans. In 1993, the first VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) was opened in Marquette, Michigan, followed by four more

Michigan-based CBOCs in Sault Sainte Marie (1997), Hancock (1997), Menominee (1998), and Ironwood (1999), and one in Rhinelander, Wisconsin (1998). In 2009, the Rural Outreach Clinic in Manistique was opened providing care three days a week.

More changes came within the last 10 years. A brand new addition housing the 40-bed Community Living Center was opened on April 14, 2008, replacing the Nursing Home Care Unit.

On October 1, 2008, the VA Medical Center was renamed the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center (OGJVAMC) to honor a local WWII Veteran and Medal of Honor recipient. Mr. Johnson was a Foster City, MI, native who was honored for singlehandedly repelling six major counterattacks in the mountains of Italy in 1944.

In June of 2012, OGJVAMC finished a \$6.5 million construction project that completely remodeled the Primary Care Outpatient Clinic and the Urgent Care Clinic on the first floor and added a second floor for specialty care clinics.

On May 25, 2013, the front circle drive was renamed the James D. Priestap Drive in honor of Sergeant First Class Priestap who was killed by a sniper's bullet in Iraq on Thanksgiving Day 2006. He was a OGJVAMC Police Officer at the time of his deployment.

Today, OGJVAMC has 57 beds, employs 686 people at its main campus and CBOCs, and provides primary, specialty and inpatient care to 20,000 Veterans each year.





## Our Mission and Vision

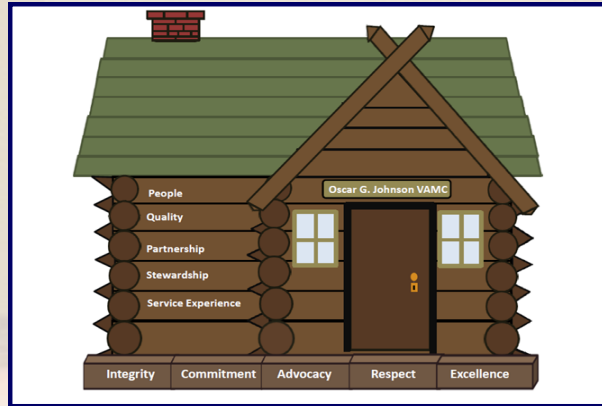
Our mission is to:

*Honor America's Veterans by providing exceptional healthcare that improves their health and well-being.*

Our vision is:

*Leaders in Rural Healthcare -  
Focused on Excellence -  
Putting Veterans First.*

To achieve our mission and realize our vision, we laid the foundation of VA's I CARE core values (see page 3). These core values are who we are, the base elements of how we go about our work, how we interact with each other, and which strategies we employ to fulfill our mission. More importantly, they are the principles we use every day in everything we do.



Upon the I CARE foundation we anchored the five pillars of OGJVAMC: *People, Quality, Service Experience, Partnerships, and Stewardship* (see below). These pillars provide the strategic direction to achieve our mission and to realize our vision and, ultimately, to provide personalized, proactive, patient-centered care.

## Five Pillars of OGJVAMC

### People

Veterans, advocates, employees, volunteers, trainees, and vendors united by a common purpose of providing health care for our nation's heroes.

### Quality

Dedicated to continuous improvement and striving to achieve a recognizable degree of excellence in health care.

### Service Experience

Daily efforts contributing to the welfare of our Veterans and one another, and focused on providing the best patient experience possible.

### Partnerships

Building bridges and creating new endeavors with internal and external stakeholders, and soliciting their feedback to ensure our Veterans are provided the right care, at the right time, in the right place for the right cost.

### Stewardship

We are committed to responsible shepherding of OGJVAMC's assets and financial resources.



## Our Patient Centered Care in Action

What our Veterans and their families are saying about our *Patient Centered Care* demonstrated by our employees and volunteers in 2016:

"I am not used to feeling supported and as though I matter to anyone. You have helped me get to this place. . . thank you."

"We have never before received such caring and genuine compassion from everyone we encountered during his brief stay. You went way beyond simply 'caring for a patient.'"

"The entire Urgent Care staff was very knowledgeable, very professional, and very personable. They are a credit to your facility."

"Never in almost 80 years have I been to a place with such excellent service. It is a pleasure to come to your hospital."

**"Thank you for giving my father the best exam that he has ever had!"**

*"The staff has always been warm and nurturing and respectful to me as a Veteran and as a person."*

"Wanted to send a big THANK YOU to the Iron Mountain VA. With all the bad press some VA centers have, Iron Mountain VA sets a standard of Excellent care. We cannot thank everyone at the Iron Mountain VA enough for the care they gave my father and our family."

**"I will say this VA Clinic is the best Veterans clinic in the U.S. Everyone shows nothing but respect and care for all of us. You can feel it when you walk into this clinic."**

"I first came here right out of Vietnam in 1970. I was here for some time over the years and have seen nothing but improvements over the years."

*"The care I received was excellent. My provider took her time and explained what was going on. In short, she cared and showed concern."*

"Oscar Johnson staff has served me in an exceptional manner: respectful, empathetic, kind, listener, informative, skilled, joking/smiling, intelligent. On a scale of 1-10 you are a 10!!!"

"You hear a lot of negative talk about the VA but I can truly say we've always gotten wonderful service."

"The VA gets lots of bad publicity. Couldn't prove it by me. You people are wonderful. Thanks for all your care."

"The entire staff in the outpatient clinic, including lab and pharmacy, treated me with respect and a little bit of humor, which humanized the event to make it a pleasant experience."

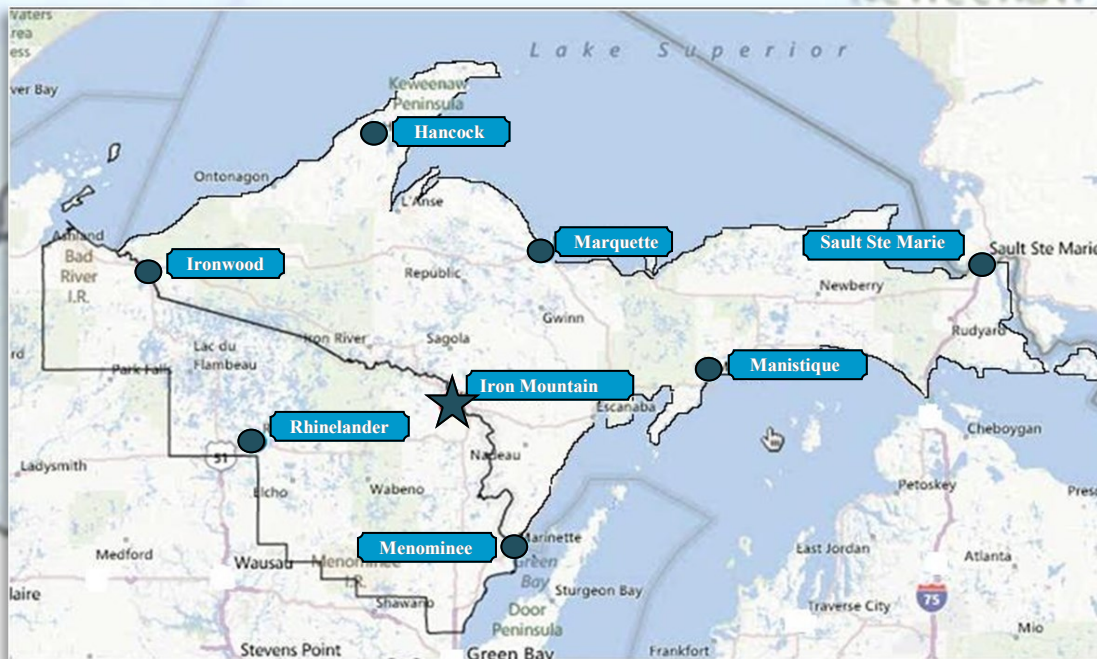
"My provider is thorough, patient, and very professional. She goes out of her way to answer my questions explain things. Over the years I've had a number of doctors and PAs and she's among the best."

**"It was my first surgery....and everything was perfect. From the pre-op appointments to the follow up care. Everything was first rate."**

"On behalf of my father and our family, we would like to express our sincere appreciation of the kindness and patience you showed during his appointment."



## Our Locations



### Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center

325 East H Street  
Iron Mountain, MI 49870  
(906) 774-3300

Outpatient Visits: 154,063\*  
Veterans Served: 19,905\*

*\* Includes Outpatient Visits and Veterans Served at Manistique Rural Outreach Clinic*



### Hancock VA Community Outpatient Clinic

787 Market Street, Suite 9  
Hancock, MI 49930  
(906) 482-7762

Outpatient Visits: 10,710  
Veterans Served: 2,046



### Ironwood VA Community Outpatient Clinic

629 West Cloverland Drive, Suite 1  
Ironwood, MI 49938  
(906) 932-0032

Outpatient Visits: 5,264  
Veterans Served: 1,525



### **Manistique VA Rural Outreach Clinic**

813 East Lakeshore Drive  
Manistique, MI 49854  
(906) 341-3420

Outpatient Visits: See Oscar G. Johnson VAMC  
Veterans Served: See Oscar G. Johnson VAMC



### **Marquette VA Outpatient Clinic**

1414 West Fair Avenue, Suite 285  
Marquette, MI 49855  
(906) 226-4618

Outpatient Visits: 13,733  
Veterans Served: 3,295



### **Menominee VA Outpatient Clinic**

1110 10th Avenue, Suite 101  
Menominee, MI 49858  
(906) 863-1286

Outpatient Visits: 7,490  
Veterans Served: 2,022



### **Rhineland VA Outpatient Clinic**

639 West Kemp Street  
Rhineland, WI 54501  
(715) 362-4080

Outpatient Visits: 15,628  
Veterans Served: 3,528



### **Sault Ste. Marie VA Outpatient Clinic**

509 Osborn Boulevard, Suite 306  
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783  
(906) 253-9383

Outpatient Visits: 6,514  
Veterans Served: 1,336

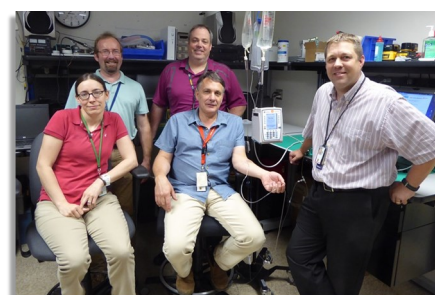




## Our Most Valuable Resource

The honors and accreditations on page 14, patient satisfaction scores on page 15, and clinical measures throughout this report would not be possible without our most valuable resource – **PEOPLE**. These honors and achievements are a testament to OGJVAMC employees – from clinical providers to housekeepers - and

volunteers who live our ICARE values every day in serving our Veterans and fulfilling our motto, "*Focused on Excellence - Putting Veterans First.*" Additionally, our employees are on the front lines as we continue our journey providing our Veterans with patient-centered care (*page 16*) and fulfilling our access initiatives (*page 17*).



*These honors and achievements are a testament to OGJVAMC employees – from clinical providers to housekeepers - and volunteers who live our ICARE values every day in serving our Veterans.*



## Our Employees Helping the Community

VA employees from OGJVAMC and its seven community based outpatient clinics are active in their communities individually, through the OGJ Employee Association, and established federal and local community programs, such as VA2K Walk for Homeless Veterans, Feds Feeds Families, Combined Federal Campaign, delivering Thanksgiving meals to needy families, and Adopt-a-Family during the holidays.



OGJVAMC was recognized for the highest participation for VA facilities 500-999 employees in the 2016 VA2K walk for Veteran homelessness.



OGJVAMC employees collected 1,312 pounds of food for the 2016 Feds Feeds Family Drive.



OGJVAMC employees raised \$32,759 for the 2016 Combined Federal Campaign donating to the charities of their choice to help people in the community.



OGJVAMC employees purchased gifts and delivered holiday cheer to 10 families, including 27 children, during the 20th annual Adopt-a-Family Program.

***VA employees from OGJVAMC and its seven community based outpatient clinics are active in their communities individually, through the OGJ employee association, and established programs.***



## Developing Current & Future Employees

OGJVAMC continues to pursue opportunities to prepare the next generation of VA employees and leaders through leadership programs, internship opportunities, and VA career fairs for local high school students (see page 28).

### RN Transition-to-Practice Program

OGJVAMC graduated two nurses from its Registered Nurse Transition-to-Practice Program in 2016. The 12-month program uses a comprehensive VA curriculum designed to assist the post-graduate nurse in the transition from entry-level nurse to competent nursing professional.



### Psychology Internship Program

OGJVAMC is accredited with the American Psychological Association (APA) for its Pre-Doctoral Internship in Psychology and graduated its third class of pre-doctoral interns.

For more information, check out the following links:

[www.ironmountain.va.gov/careers](http://www.ironmountain.va.gov/careers)

[www.psychologytraining.va.gov/eligibility](http://www.psychologytraining.va.gov/eligibility)



### LEAN Yellow Belt Certification

Embracing VHA's improvement mantra of **"Improving Our Work IS Our Work"**, OGJVAMC has had 27 employees in 2016 (46 total to date) complete certification in VA's LEAN Yellow Belt Program. Graduates attended an eight week virtual Yellow Belt course that teaches the principles and tools of LEAN thinking and framework for supporting the VA's culture of continuous improvement. In addition to completing the course, including a written exam, the graduates completed an improvement project in their work area, which positively impacted the Veterans we serve.



*OGJVAMC continues to pursue opportunities to prepare the next generation of VA employees and leaders.*



## Our Volunteers are a Force Multiplier

OGJVAMC volunteers are a force multiplier, providing 30,011 hours of service in 2016, which is the equivalent of 15 full-time employees and \$707,059 in labor costs.

These volunteers provide invaluable support to program areas such as Recreation Therapy, Nursing and Patient Care, Out-patient, Chaplain Service, Pharmacy, Library, Human Resources, Voluntary Service, Veteran Transportation, Pet Therapy, Volunteer Escorts, and Butterfly Wish Program.

The 131 volunteer drivers in the Veterans Transportation Network logged 216,764 miles transporting 2,032 Veterans to and from their VA appointments.

Volunteers have been instrumental in conducting over 30 special events, outings, and ceremonies for the benefit of Veteran patients. These include the annual Patient Carnival, Memorial Day Tribute Ride, Holiday Gift Shop, VA2K Walk, Memorial



Day and Veterans Day ceremonies, and numerous activities and outings for the CLC residents.

*For more information on volunteering:*

[www.ironmountain.va.gov/giving](http://www.ironmountain.va.gov/giving)

### 2016 OGJVAMC Volunteers

- 438 Volunteers
- 68 Youth Volunteers
- 30,011 Hours served
- \$707,059 Equivalent labor costs
- 15 Equivalent full time employees
- 216,764 Miles driven by 131 volunteers transporting 2,032 Veterans.



***OGJVAMC volunteers are a force multiplier, providing 30,011 hours of service in 2016, which is the equivalent of 15 full-time employees and \$707,059 in labor costs.***





## Our Services Recognized



### ***Quality and Efficiency***

OGJVAMC was recognized by the Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Program as one of the fastest improved hospitals in healthcare quality in FY2016,. OGJVAMC ended the year with 4 stars in the SAIL Model and nationally ranked 19th for *Quality* and 17th for *Efficiency* among all VA Medical Centers.



### ***Best Place to Work***

OGJVAMC was identified as the 8th best place to work among all facilities in the Veterans Health Administration in 2016 per VA's All Employee Survey and Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Program.



### ***Accreditation from The Joint Commission***

OGJVAMC received accreditation from The Joint Commission for the Hospital, Home Care Program, Behavioral Health Care Program, and Long Term Care Program. The Joint Commission is the leading accreditor of health care organizations in America.



### ***Accreditation from CARF International***

OGJVAMC's Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Program received accreditation from CARF International, an independent nonprofit organization that accredits specialized services. The CARF inspection and survey made no recommendations, which is an extraordinary achievement as only three percent of CARF surveys result in no recommendations.



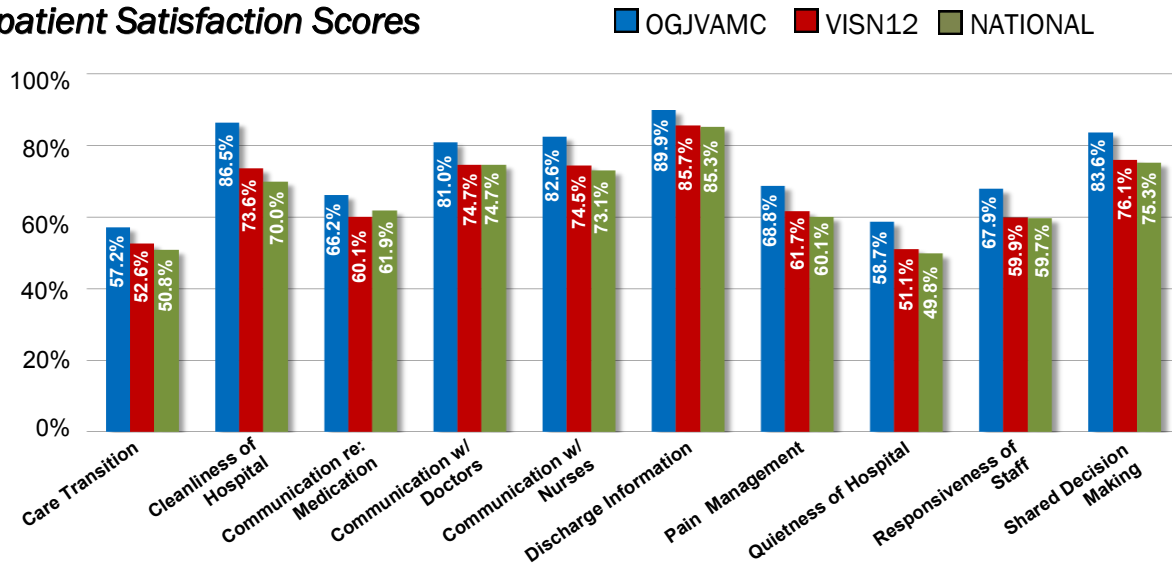
### ***Accreditation from College of American Pathologists***

OGJVAMC's Pathology and Laboratory Service received accreditation from the College of American Pathologists (CAP), and is now one of more than 7,000 CAP-accredited facilities worldwide. The U.S. federal government recognizes the CAP Laboratory Accreditation Program as being equal to or more stringent than the government's own inspection program.

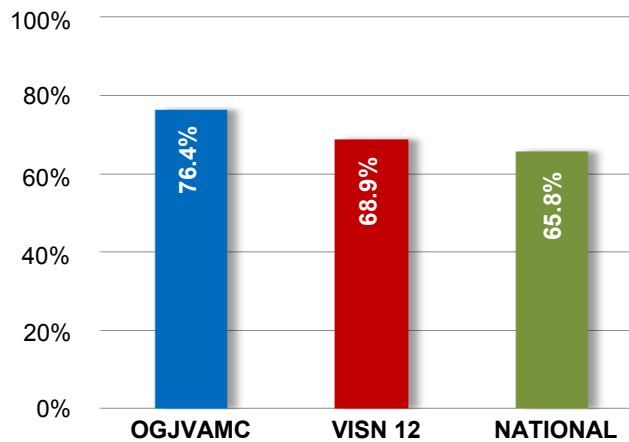


# Our Patient Satisfaction in 2016

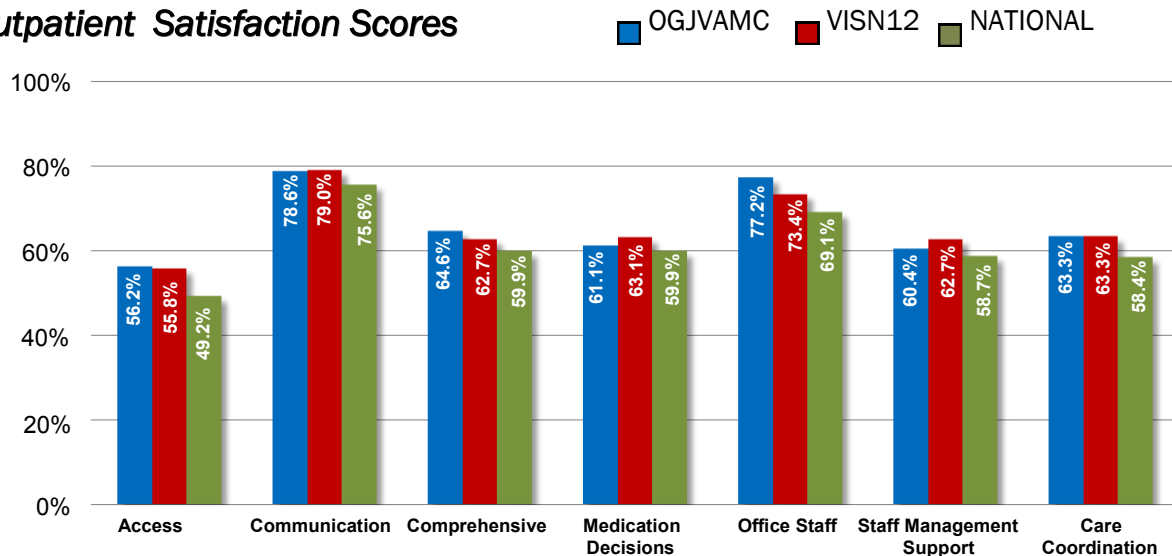
## Inpatient Satisfaction Scores



## Inpatient: Willingness to Recommend Hospital



## Outpatient Satisfaction Scores





## Our Journey To Patient-Centered Care

OGJVAMC is entering the fourth year of its journey to provide *personalized, proactive, patient-centered care*. Patient-Centered Care (PCC) is built on VA's core values of Integrity, Commitment, Advocacy, Respect, and Excellence (I CARE). Patient-centered care combines the clinical practice of medicine with personalized, proactive care. Care is provided through a patient-driven health care team within healing environments and relationships.

We believe in a Veteran's whole health - physical, mental, emotional and spiritual - and taking into account self-care, professional care, and community relationships.

Our journey has been exciting and activity-filled. Thirty-Six staff engagement sessions were completed by 80 percent of OGJVAMC's workforce of nearly 680 employees who are now well-versed in the PCC model. Over the next year, the goal is to continue to educate all new employees and thus, all staff will be champions of PCC.

OGJVAMC has already initiated programs to improve the experience of Veterans, and provide care for their whole health. Some recent initiatives include:

- Adding an acupuncture clinic,



- Establishing the Care Companion Program where hospice Veterans will not be alone at the end of their life,
- Providing the human/healing touch (massages and foot soaks) for residents of the Community Living Center, and
- Making aesthetic improvements to improve way-finding.

In 2017, OGJVAMC will continue to implement the PCC model with local initiatives that are focused on enhancing clinical *practice* and the overall *experience* of Veterans.

A Peer Support Specialist attended a national conference to learn the best practice of health coaching. Efforts are underway to develop this program in which Veterans will complete Personalized Health Inventories (PHI) to communicate and partner with providers to reach their personal health goals to improve their lives.

Our goal is to design a system where we partner with our Veterans to optimize their health in ways that matter to them most.

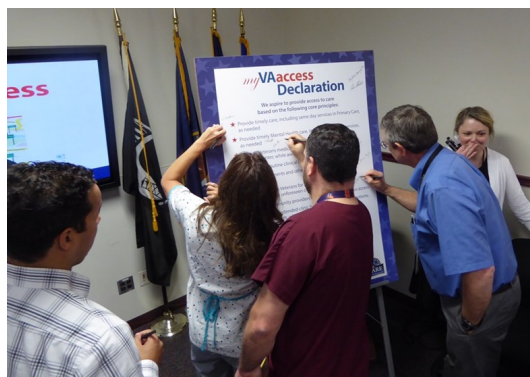
***Thirty-six staff engagement sessions were completed by 80 percent of OGJVAMC's workforce of nearly 680 employees who are now well-versed in the PCC model.***



## Increasing Access for Our Veterans

Increasing access to VA healthcare has been a priority of the Veterans Health Administration in 2016. OGVAMC executive leaders and service chiefs, along with VA medical center leaders nationwide, signed a *MyVA* Access Declaration on April 19, 2016, as part of the broader *MyVA* initiative started in 2015 (see insert on this page).

The declaration states that we aspire to provide access to care based on the following core principles: timely care, including same day services in Primary and Mental Health Care; offering appointments and other follow-up options upon leaving a clinic; actively engaging Veterans if a clinic is canceled; providing timely response to clinical inquiries; integrating community providers as appropriate to enhance access; offering Veterans extended hours and/or virtual care options; and transparently reporting access to



care data to Veterans and the public.

OGJVAMC has embraced *MyVA* Access and completed a number of initiatives to fulfill these principles:

- In August, OGVAMC was recognized as one of the first 39 VA Medical Centers (out of 152) to achieve same day access for Primary Care.
- On September 1 OGVAMC began offering Veterans the ability to directly schedule routine audiology and optometry appointments without a referral from their primary care provider. This change provides more timely care for these services and frees up primary care providers to see patients who need more than just a referral.
- OGVAMC continues to expand its telehealth capabilities to improve access and more timely care closer to our rural Veterans' homes (*see page 18*). Our newest telehealth clinic provides hearing exams and hearing aid fittings without traveling nine to ten hours round trip for Veterans living in the eastern UP (*see page 19*).
- OGVAMC now provides Veterans the option to schedule a follow up appointment before they leave the clinic.
- OGVAMC held two access stand-downs to assure no patients were waiting an undue amount of time for urgent care.



In 2015, the VA embarked on a historic, department-wide transformation to change its culture and place the Veteran at the center of everything we do. This transformation is called *MyVA*, and it is driving the VA to reorganize for success and implement organizational reforms that will unify VA's efforts to best serve our Veterans.

To achieve this transformation, *MyVA* has five primary focus areas being embraced across VA and at each of our VA health care facilities, including OGVAMC. These are:

- ◇ Improving the Veteran's experience to be seamless, integrated, and responsive every time
- ◇ Enhancing strategic partnerships to consistently meet the needs of our Veterans
- ◇ Improving the employee experience and focusing on people and culture to better serve Veterans
- ◇ Improving internal support services to eliminate duplication and increase efficiency
- ◇ Establishing a culture of continuous improvement

*OGJVAMC has embraced MyVA Access and completed a number of initiatives to fulfill these principles.*

## Telehealth Increasing Access to VA Care

### 43 clinics provide telehealth services:

- Audiology
- Behavioral Health (Gen)
- Cardiac Device - Medtronic
- Cardiac Device - St. Jude
- Cardiology
- Cardio Arrhythmia
- Comp & Pension (MH)
- Dermatology
- Diabetes
- Diabetic Education
- Endocrinology
- Epilepsy
- Hematology
- Home Based Care
- Infectious Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Nutrition
- Nutrition-Diabetes
- Occupational Health
- Pathology
- Peripheral Vascular Surgery
- Pharmacy
- Post-Op Surgery
- Pre-Natal
- Pre-Op Anesthesia
- Primary Care
- Prosthetics
- Psychiatry
- PTSD
- Pulmonology
- Retinal Imaging
- Rheumatology
- Social Work
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Spirometry
- Substance Abuse
- Thoracic Surgery
- Transplant (heart & lung)
- Vascular Surgery
- Weight Mgt - Individual
- Weight Mgt - Group

OGJVMC was the first VAMC in the nation to develop and use telehealth technology when, in 1996, pathologists in Milwaukee controlled microscopes to view specimens at the Iron Mountain facility.

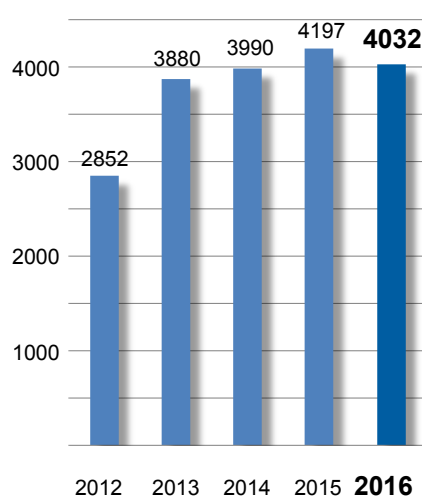
OGJVMC has since vastly expanded its use of state-of-the-art telehealth technologies to 43 primary and specialty care clinics to serve rural Veterans not close to a VA health care specialty provider. Telehealth services include Clinical Video Conferencing, Store and Forward, and Home Telehealth (*see page 21*). In 2016, OGJVMC implemented its VA Video Connect Program, which allows Veterans to connect with their provider from the comfort of their home.



The benefits of telehealth appointments include increased access to specialty care not available locally and the reduced travel time and costs for the Veteran. This is particularly helpful for working Veterans who would otherwise have to take vacation time to travel to a larger VA facility for care.

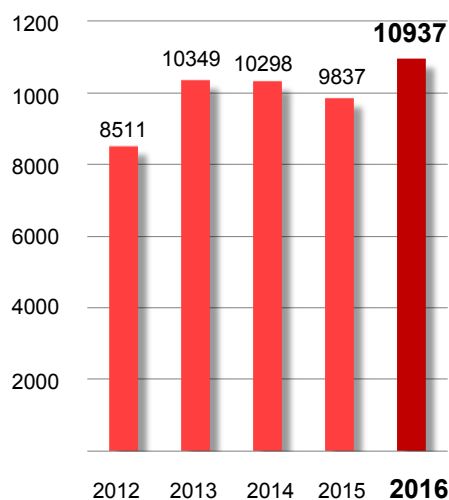
Telehealth is not meant to replace face-to-face care but rather to enhance the overall health care experience in a convenient, efficient and cost effective manner.

Patients using telehealth\*



\* Does not include Home Telehealth

Telehealth appointments\*



*The benefits of Telehealth appointments are increased access to primary and specialty care services not available locally.*



## Our Newest Telehealth Clinic

The most recent telehealth technology used by OGJVAMC increases access to VA audiology services for our Veterans in the eastern Upper Peninsula—one of the farthest areas from the main facility in Iron Mountain.

Using state-of-the-art tele-audiology equipment, OGJVAMC began conducting hearing aid fittings in July 2016 followed by hearing exams in December for Veterans at the Sault Ste. Marie VA clinic with an audiologist located in Iron Mountain.

With this technology Veterans can be diagnosed with the type and degree of hearing loss, discuss options available for treatment, be fitted with the latest technology available in hearing aids based on results, and can have hearing aid adjustments completed.



Using this technology eliminates Veterans having to travel nine or more hours round trip to Iron Mountain for audiology services. Eliminating the long drive, and possibly overnight stay, removes one of the key barriers for Veterans who have put off seeking care due to travel logistics. Check out a TV story at: <http://www.9and10news.com/story/34337637/sault-ste-marie-va-clinic-connects-iron-mountain-doctors-to-fit-veterans-with-hearing-aids>

## Honoring our Veterans in 2016



*POW/MIA Recognition Ceremony*



*Patient Memorial Service*



*Vietnam War 50th Commemoration Ceremony  
(See story on page 24)*



*National Salute to Veteran Week*



*Memorial Day Ceremony*



*Memorial Day Tribute Ride*

*Eliminating the long drive. . . removes one of the key barriers for Veterans who have put off seeking care due to travel logistics.*

## Health Care for Our Women Veterans

OGJVAMC and its seven community outpatient clinics offer clinically trained, gender specific health care providers to all female Veterans to ensure comprehensive care is available in a single visit. OGJVAMC has continued to enhance its women's health programs in 2016.

- Enrollment of female Veterans is increasing. In Fiscal Year (FY) 16, there were 1,115 unique female Veterans who sought care at OGJVAMC or one of its Community Based Outpatient Clinics. This represents an 11% increase from the previous year. OGJVAMC also served 155 female CHAMPVA Veteran spouses in FY16 .
- Many gender specific health campaigns are conducted throughout the year including breast cancer awareness, women's heart health awareness, women's history month, and cultural sensitivity campaigns.
- A full continuum of care for female Veterans includes: comprehensive primary and specialty care, mental health services, disease prevention and screening, and urgent care.
- Enhanced maternity care coordination



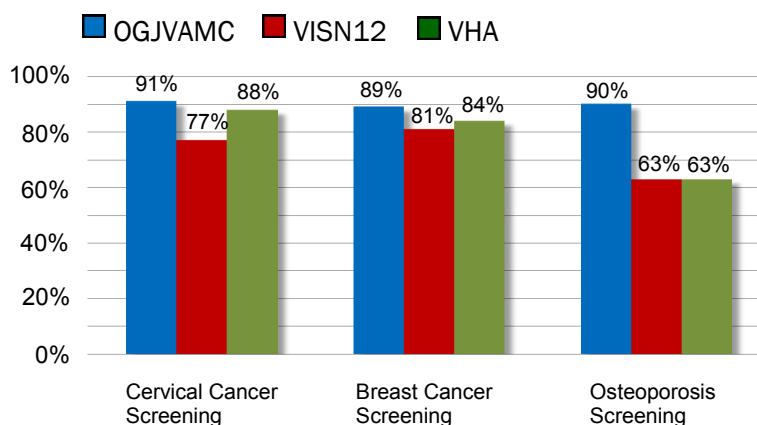
services are offered through our Maternity Care Coordinator.

- OGJVAMC's women's health services have continued to demonstrate excellence in clinical practices. This is evidenced by the External Peer Review Program (EPRP) clinical measures in cervical cancer, breast cancer, and osteoporosis screenings (see below) .
- A strategic plan continues to guide the efforts of the Women's Health Services and to ensure the delivery of the highest quality, evidence-based, comprehensive health care to our female Veterans.

For more information on Women Veterans Healthcare: [www.womenshealth.va.gov](http://www.womenshealth.va.gov)



### Excellence in Clinic Practices for Women's Health Care Cervical Cancer, Breast Cancer, and Osteoporosis



*A full continuum of care for female Veterans includes comprehensive primary and specialty care, mental health services, disease prevention and screenings, and urgent care.*



## Helping Our Veterans Stay at Home

OGJVMC has a comprehensive Home and Community Based Care (H&CBC) program that provides needed services to enable Veterans to remain in their home setting as long as possible. H&CBC programs may be provided singularly or in combination with other programs. Over 1,100 Veterans received H&CBC services in Fiscal Year 2016. With the Veteran population aging, the need for these services continues to grow. In order to meet the needs, the H&CBC programs have expanded resulting in a 24 percent growth rate from FY 2015 to FY 2016.

**Home Based Primary Care (HBPC)** brings health care to the comfort of the Veteran's home, providing routine care and continuous services for complex chronic disabling diseases. HBPC was started in 2008, and, to date, the program has served over 550 Veterans.

**Home Telehealth Program** provides in-home monitoring and care coordination for Veterans with a wide range of diagnoses and for promoting healthy living such as Weight Management and Smoking Cessation



programs. Over 400 Veterans used the Home Telehealth Program in 2016. Care coordinators assist Veterans with navigating their healthcare and promoting self-management skills through education and case management with the support of technology.



### H&CBC Services

- Home Base Primary Care (HBPC)
- Home Telehealth
- Purchased Skilled Home Care
- Outpatient Respite
- Home Hospice
- Homemaker/Home Health Aide
- Contracted Adult Day Health Care
- Veterans Directed Home Care
- Contract Nursing Home
- Home Infusion Therapy

*Over 1,100 Veterans received Home and Community Based Care services in FY 2016 and over 400 Veterans used the Home Telehealth Program.*

## Our Peer Groups are Impacting Recovery

One of the effective treatments used today by OGJVAMC in its Mental Health Recovery Program is peer-led, peer support recovery groups. Peer support services in the VA are specifically designed to offer hope for recovery and role models for successful management of mental illness. Peer Support Providers help Veterans develop skills to manage their recovery, improve their quality of life, support their personal goals, and achieve independence from institutional settings.

At the end of FY 2016, there were 108 Veterans participating in 17 peer groups (16 Veteran peer groups and one peer spouse group). There are four types of peer groups hosted by OGJVAMC:

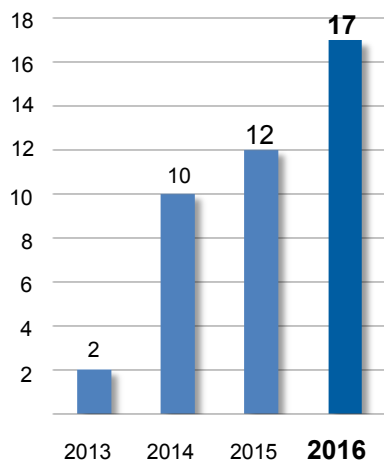
- **Peer Support Groups** normalize the Veterans' experience and let them know they are not alone. The group environment also gives Veterans a chance to consider alternative behaviors and approaches to strengthen their recovery through artistic means.
- **Peer Social Groups** integrate Veterans who are struggling with social skills into community events and activities.

- **Creative Writing / Journaling Groups** normalize the Veterans' experience and gives them a chance to consider alternative behaviors and approaches to strengthen their recovery through artistic means.
- **Peer Spouse Groups** are open to any spouse or significant other of a Veteran to help them understand their Veteran better so that they can enjoy a healthier partner and familial relationship.

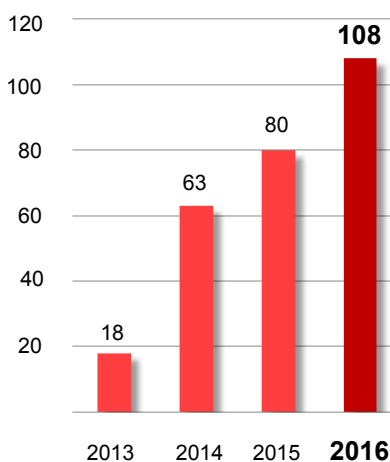
Peer Support Specialists are also involved in facilitating Warrior to Soul Mate retreats (*see page 23*), Moral Injury Groups in Iron Mountain and Escanaba, and Intensive Out-patient Program for Substance Use Disorder (IOP-SUD)

Studies have demonstrated the positive impact peer groups have in improving social functioning and the quality of life for Veterans while reducing hospitalizations and use of crisis services. Veterans participating in peer groups are also engaged in individual therapy. Peer support groups and evidenced-based therapies are both part of the VA's mental health recovery model.

No. of Peer Groups



No. of Veterans in Peer Groups



### OGJVAMC Peer Groups:

- **14 Peer Support Groups:** Iron Mountain, Escanaba, Marquette, Menominee, and Rhinelander
- **1 Peer Social Group:** Iron Mountain
- **1 Writing/Journaling Group:** Iron Mountain
- **1 Peer Spouse Group:** Escanaba

*An effective treatment used today by OGJVAMC in its Mental Health Recovery Program is peer-led, peer support recovery groups.*



## Taking Care of our Returning Soldiers. . .

In 2016 VA renamed its Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation New Dawn (OEF/OIF/OND) Program to Transition and Care Management (TCM). This reflects the program's broader mission to provide care and case management not only to those Veterans who served in combat supporting OEF/OIF/OND but also to all post 9/11 Veterans in need of care management.

OGJVAMC's TCM team works in conjunction with the Escanaba Vet Center and other VA offices to reach out to military personnel returning from combat operations and assist them in making a seamless transition back to their family and communities and to VA health care.

The team provides benefit and enroll-

ment information regarding VA health care to Veterans returning to OGJVAMC's geographic area and then reintegrate into their communities and civilian life.

The team's other responsibilities include coordinating the continuity of ambulatory and inpatient care upon discharge or transfer from military hospitals as well as assessing all newly enrolled combat Veterans for community resource needs and care management.

*For more information on VA's Transition Care Management call 906-774-3300, x32708 or 32707 or check out the following:*

<http://www.ironmountain.va.gov/services/returning/index.asp>

<http://www.oefoif.va.gov/index.asp>

## . . . and Their Family Life

In 2016 OGJVAMC's Chaplain Service in partnership with the Behavioral Health Service initiated the Warrior to Soul Mate (W2SM) Program. Warrior to Soul Mate is a new program that provides hope and renewal to relationships impacted by military service, deployments, and war.

W2SM is a two-day retreat held at a local hotel or retreat center. The retreat is free of charge for both the Veteran and his or her significant other including hotel and meals.

OGJVAMC held six retreats throughout the Upper Peninsula and northern Wisconsin in 2016 with 48 couples attending. Six more retreats are planned for 2017.

W2SM provides a safe and healing environment for Veterans to renew and recon-

nect with their significant other through the teaching of productive communication skills. There is clear evidence that healthy relationships decrease episodes of stress related illness, divorce, depression, suicide, abuse and neglect.

The retreat is specifically designed for couples who have been in a committed relationship for at least six months. Other prerequisites are that one person must be a Veteran enrolled in VA health care and the couple has had no domestic abuse issues in the past six months.

*For more information on the Warrior to Soul Mate program contact OGJVAMC's Chaplain at:*

(906) 774-3300, extension 32066 or  
[Herbert.Becker@va.gov](mailto:Herbert.Becker@va.gov).

***Warrior to Soul Mate is a new program that provides hope and renewal to relationships impacted by military service, deployments, and war.***

## Honoring Our Vietnam Era Veterans



OGJVAMC and the Escanaba VA Vet Center held Vietnam War 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration events on March 29, 2016, to thank and honor Veterans of the Vietnam War era and their families.

OGJVAMC held its event at Bay College West Campus in Iron Mountain. The featured speaker was Joe Stevens, an Army Veteran who served in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969, and he spoke to nearly 200 people in attendance. The ceremony included special music, a video tribute, a formal thank you from the Medical Center Director, and the symbolism of the Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pin, which was presented to all Vietnam era Veterans.

OGJVAMC partnered with military service organizations; Veteran Service Officers; the Thomas St. Onge Vietnam Veterans Museum; Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency; Jacobetti Home for Veterans; and

other VA Services to provide memorabilia displays and 22 information booths that those in attendance could browse two hours before the ceremony.

The Escanaba Vet Center held its program at the American Legion Post 71 in Gladstone, Michigan. The keynote speaker, Gary Bjorkquist, a Vietnam Veteran, spoke to 255 Veterans and guests in attendance. The ceremony included the history of the Vet Center Program being born from Vietnam Veterans forming groups to help each other with challenges from combat. The Vet Center also presented Vietnam Veteran Lapel Pins to Vietnam era Veterans in attendance and hosted a luncheon.

Both the Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center and the Escanaba Vet Center are Commemorative Partners with the [National Vietnam War 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration](#).

Check out photos of the OGJVAMC event and ceremony [here](#).



*OGJVAMC and the Escanaba VA Vet Center held Vietnam War 50<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Events on March 29, 2016, to thank and honor the Veterans of the Vietnam War era and their families.*



## Reaching Out to Our Veterans

OGJVAMC continues to make outreach to Veterans throughout its large geographic area a priority. Working with local Veteran Service Officers, Veteran service organizations, and tribal and community representatives, OGJVAMC hosted and/or participated in 31 outreach events with over 3,500 people in attendance, including seven events at tribal nations. These events include health and benefit fairs, Veteran Town Halls, and community and Veteran-centric events.

A high priority for OGJVAMC's leadership is listening to Veterans. This makes Veteran Town Halls a key component of the medical center's outreach program, with OGJVAMC hosting 10 Veteran Town Halls



in FY2016 and a total of 27 since 2012.

In 2016 OGJVAMC began conducting Veteran Town Halls for Veterans not located near the medical center or its community based clinics. Six town halls were held more than an hour from a VA healthcare facility.

## Veterans Information Radio Show



Since December of 2011, OGJVAMC has partnered with WJNR Radio, 101.5 FM, for a monthly live radio show called *Veterans Information Hour*. In 2015, the format changed to the *Veteran Information Minute*, where a show on a specific VA service, program or event is taped and aired in portions over the next month on three different 100,000 watt radio stations.

Hosted by long time radio personality and Vietnam Veteran, Aaron Harper, OGJVAMC has provided subject matter experts each month to talk about various benefits and service.



### *Veterans Information Minute Topics in 2016*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| * VA and OGJVAMC Strategic Direction and Initiatives | * Flu Shots                            |
| * New Patient Advocate Program                       | * Warrior to Soul Mate Retreat Program |
| * Vietnam War 50th Commemoration Event               | * Mental Health Summit                 |
| * MyVA Access Initiatives                            | * Caregiver Support Program            |
| * Direct Scheduling of Audiology & Optometry         | * Woman Veterans Program               |

***Veteran Town Halls are a key component of the medical center's outreach program with OGJVAMC hosting 10 Veteran Town Halls in FY2016 and a total of 27 since 2012.***

## Walking the Recovery Road

On May 19 OGJVAMC hosted Walking the Recovery Road, a wellness event that focused on recovering and maintaining health in a holistic manner to include wellness of mind, body and spirit. The event featured both community and VA speakers discussing acupuncture, Chinese herbs, mindfulness, and spirituality. The VA recognizes that these impact both physical and mental healing and wellness and has made alternative medicine such as acupuncture available to Veterans. Veterans also shared their stories of healing as they walk the "recovery road."

For more photos see our Facebook album [here](#).

To contact OGJVAMC's Recovery Program Coordinator: 800-215-8262, extension 32777



## OGJVAMC Hosts Mental Health Summit

OGJVAMC held the fourth annual Mental Health Summit on August 5, 2016. The purpose for the summit was to bring together key stakeholders in the local community with the goal of enhancing access to mental health services and addressing the mental health care needs of Veterans and their family members.

Key topics discussed included: Access to VA health care, suicide prevention; and the needs of Veterans and families, including Primary Care-Mental Health Integration, Give an Hour campaign, Mental

Health First Aid, and peer support services .

The Summit was well attended by OGJVAMC's community partners, Veteran Service Officers, Veterans, family members, and VA staff.

OGJVAMC and the community looks forward to this annual event as a way to further collaborate with the community in an effort to improve care for Veterans and their families

*Walking the Recovery Road featured both community and VA speakers discussing acupuncture, Chinese herbs, mindfulness, and spirituality*



# Ending Veteran Homelessness

The Homeless Prevention Program Team at OGJVAMC served 242 Veterans in FY2016. The Health Care for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) Homeless Prevention Program provides a continuum of services to include outreach and case management with a “no wrong door” approach. The Homeless Prevent Program Team works closely and partners with community providers in working toward the goal of ending Veteran homelessness. Case Management services are provided to eligible Veterans through referral to VA programs and other community support resources. The Homeless Prevention Program is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

## Housing Assistance

HCHV partners with community providers in Marquette and Sault St. Marie (Great Lakes Recovery Center) to provide transitional housing for homeless male and female Veterans for up to ninety days to support and assist them with transition to permanent housing.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) have joined together to create the HUD-VA Supported Housing program. The program was created to serve chronically homeless Veterans who are in recovery from mental health or substance use disorders who need assistance to maintain independent housing in the community. The OGJVAMC HUD-VASH Program recently expanded and now

has the capacity to assist 31 Veteran families in Michigan; and in FY2016 OGJVAMC was awarded five vouchers to be utilized in Wisconsin.

## National Veteran Homeless Call Center

The VA established the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans Hotline to ensure that homeless Veterans or Veterans at-risk for homelessness have free, 24/7 access to trained counselors.

OGJVAMC’s Homeless Prevention Program Team successfully addressed 26 crisis calls to the National Veteran Homeless Call Center during FY2016

*Homeless or at risk Veterans can call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at: 1-877-4AID-VET (1-877-424-3838).*

*For more information on VA’s Homeless Prevention Program:*

[www.va.gov/homeless](http://www.va.gov/homeless)

[www.ironmountain.va.gov/services/homeless](http://www.ironmountain.va.gov/services/homeless)

### 2016 Homeless or At Risk Veterans

- **242** Veterans served
- **8** using Contract Transitional Housing
- **36** using HUD-VASH vouchers.
- **26** called National Veteran Homeless Call Center

***OGJVAMC’s Homeless Prevention team served 242 Veterans in FY2016. . . . and successfully addressed 26 crisis calls to the National Veteran Homeless Call Center.***

## Students Learn About VA Careers

The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center hosted over 450 high school students from seven area high schools on February 29, 2016. It was the fifth annual VA Career Day where the students get a first-hand look at various VA careers.

Students were able to visit any of the 23 career booths. They were exposed to a variety of professions including but not limited to nursing, medicine, social work, psychology, medical technology, rehabilitation medicine, culinary and nutrition, engineering, computer/IT, law enforcement, human resources, biomedical technology, medical records coding, and finance.

Students participated in hands-on demonstrations such as checking vitals of a fully computerized, life-like patient mannequin and using state-of-the-art dental equipment to digitally map a set of model teeth.

"It was really illuminating to see all the different careers you can get into. You hear about all these careers, but to see them in person and what is available really helps," said Grace Hansen, a junior at Iron Mountain High School.



"I'm amazed at how many career opportunities are in this building. It was a very positive experience for our students," said Lisa Olson, Principal at Forest Park Schools.

The number of schools participating in OGJVMC's VA Career Day has grown exponentially over the last five years, with seven area schools participating this year.

"I'm so impressed with how many high schools are interested in this event and called us to participate," said MaryAnne Gibler, VA Career Day Coordinator.

These VA Career Days have impacted students who participated in past years.

"I get feedback from students on how they changed their career focus as a result of attending these VA career days," said Gibler. "One student who attended our first event is in her first year of a doctoral psychology program, and she credits her visit here."

Check out the TV story [here](#).

See more photos on our Facebook album or [click here!](#)

***"You hear about all these careers, but to see them in person and what is available really helps."***

***~ Grace Hansen, Iron Mountain High School junior.***



## Our Construction Projects

The Oscar G. Johnson VA Medical Center is committed to being a state-of-the-art facility to provide Veterans the best care possible. Since 2012 there were many upgrades and renovations to the facility including primary care specialty care, surgical, dental, Urgent Care Clinic, Imaging, and Prosthetic spaces.

In FY 2016, OGJVAMC completed the new spaces for the Physical Therapy Clinic, including a mock apartment for learning adaptive equipment, transfer safety, and skills. In FY2016 OGJVAMC continued construction projects that will improve healthcare for our Veterans as well as patient and visitor experiences.



These include:

- Expansion of the Community Living Center
- New Veterans Canteen Service cafeteria and store
- Renovated office spaces on the 5th floor



*In FY 2016 OGJVAMC continued construction projects that would improve health care for our Veterans as well as patient and visitor experiences.*

# OGJVAMC By The Numbers in 2016

## Health Care Provided

## Workforce



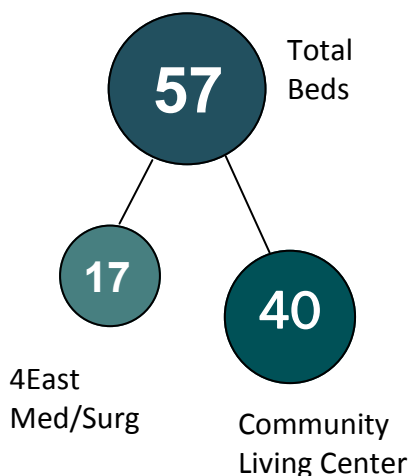
- ★ **677** Employees
- ★ **217** Nurses
- ★ **37** Physicians
- ★ **28** Social Workers
- ★ **28** Mid-level providers (DNP, NPs, PAs)
- ★ **12** Licensed Psychologists
- ★ **10** Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Providers (PTs, OTs, SLPs, Chiropractor)
- ★ **7** Clinical Pharmacy Specialists
- ★ **2** Dentists
- ★ **3** Optometrists
- ★ **3** Audiologists

\* Includes Community Outpatient/Rural Outreach Clinics

## Dollars Spent\*

**\$141.9M** Operating Budget  
**\$ 4.4M** Construction Funds  
**\$ 0.3M** Rural Health Funds

## Operating Beds



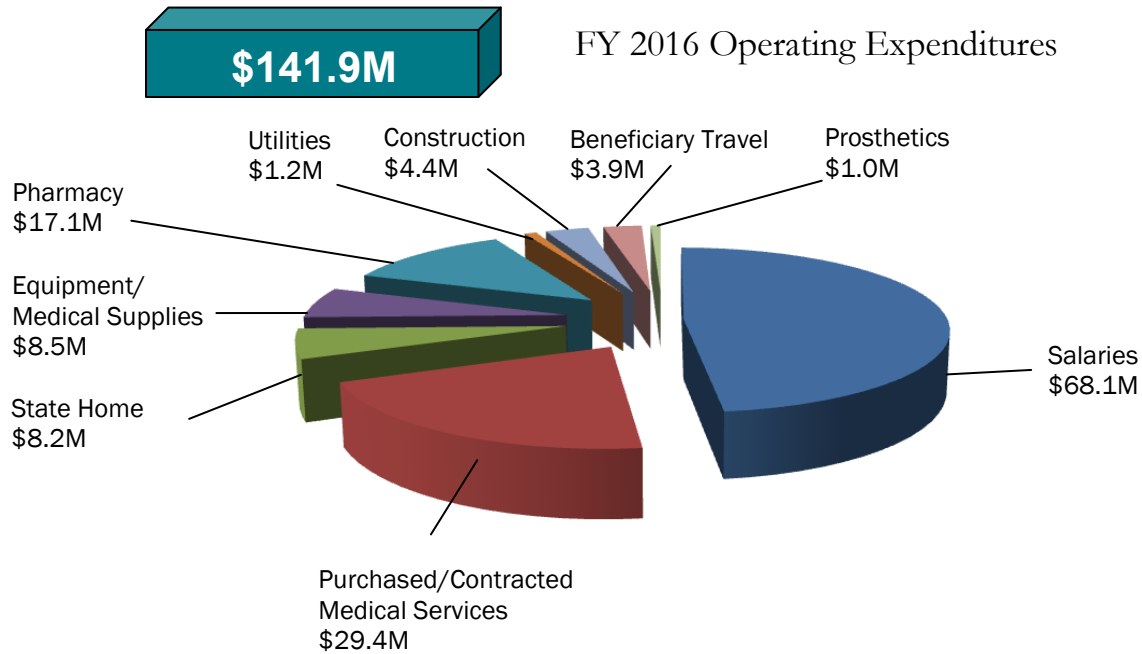
## Demographics

**25,864** Square Miles  
**25** Counties Served  
**7** Community Outpatient Clinics



# Our Financial Expenditures

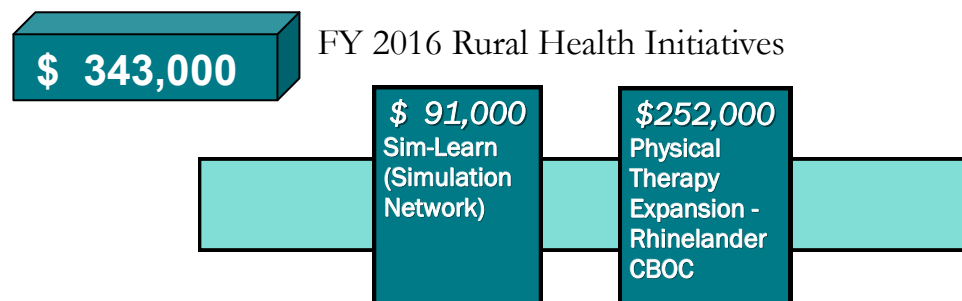
## Operating Expenditures



## Construction Expenditures



## Rural Health Expenditures



Oscar G. Johnson  
VA Medical Center  
Office of Public Affairs  
325 East H Street  
Iron Mountain, MI 49801

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Extension 32001

Visit us online at [www.ironmountain.va.gov](http://www.ironmountain.va.gov) and follow us on:



[www.facebook.com/VAIronMountain](https://www.facebook.com/VAIronMountain)

Questions or comments? Email us at [bradley.nelson@va.gov](mailto:bradley.nelson@va.gov)